Human Rights

THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Fact Sheet No. 16

World Campaign for Human Rights

The *Human Rights Fact Sheet* series is published by the Centre for Human Rights, United Nations Office at Geneva. It deals with selected questions of human rights that are under active consideration or are of particular interest.

Human Rights Fact Sheets are intended to assist an ever-wider audience in better understanding basic human rights, what the United Nations is doing to promote and protect them and the international machinery available to help realize those rights. *Human Rights Fact Sheets* are free of charge and distributed world-wide. Their reproduction in languages other than the official United Nations languages is encouraged provided that no changes are made in the contents and the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva is advised by the reproducing organization and given credit as being the source of the material.

International human rights covenants

At the core of the United Nations action to protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms is the International Bill of Human Rights. The Bill consists of three instruments:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The Universal Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. The two Covenants were adopted by the General Assembly in 1966.

These three documents define human rights and fundamental freedoms. They lay down basic standards which have inspired more than 50 United Nations human rights conventions, declarations, sets of rules and principles.

The Covenants are international legal instruments. This means that Member States of the United Nations, when they become States parties to a Covenant, are accepting major obligations.

They bind themselves to bring national law and practice into line with the provisions of the Covenant.

They become answerable to the international community by reporting regularly on what they have done to ensure that the rights proclaimed in the Covenant are being respected and enjoyed, and on the progress they have made towards this end.

This Fact Sheet describes the work of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which monitors the observance of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and examines the reports of States parties. On 1 October 1991, there were 100 States parties to this Covenant.

READEX FICHE

First of all, a word of explanation on the way in which a State becomes a party to such an international human rights treaty is needed. After its *adoption* by the General Assembly, the Treaty is opened for *signature*. The next step is *ratification* by the competent national authorities—in most cases parliament. However, in some cases, States become parties to a treaty without prior signature — by *accession*.

The list of States parties and the complete text of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights will be found in the final pages of this Fact Sheet.

(For a commentary on the International Bill of Human Rights and the texts of the Universal Declaration and both Covenants, readers should consult Fact Sheet No. 2: *The International Bill of Human Rights*.)

Economic, social and cultural rights

The human rights which the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights seeks to promote and protect are of three kinds. Briefly summarized, they are:

The right to work in just and favourable conditions;

The right to social protection, to an adequate standard of living and to the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health;

The right to education and to enjoyment of the benefits of cultural freedom and scientific progress.

The Covenant expresses these basic human rights in a way which makes them understandable to everyone and sets standards which all countries can accept as desirable goals. The Covenant also addresses a second important task of governments and the United Nations in the field of human rights: implementation.

The need for laws to ensure that economic, social and cultural rights are, or will become, a reality for all, and for State guarantees that these rights may be enjoyed without any form of discrimination is emphasized in the Covenant.

Human rights and development

The Covenant breaks new ground in international treaty-making by linking the advancement of human rights directly to government policies to promote economic, social and cultural development and the adoption and execution of international economic and technical co-operation programmes. Ensuring that economic and social development programmes safeguard and enlarge the enjoyment of human rights is one of its principal aims.

To that end, the Covenant provides not only for monitoring the implementation of its provisions through a system of State reporting but also through reporting by United Nations specialized agencies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on the effects of policies and programmes on economic, social cultural rights falling within the scope of their activities. It also makes it possible to refer relevant development needs to these and other agencies concerned with technical assistance for eventual action.

Entry into force

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights entered into force in 1976 when, by ratification or accession, the number of States parties had risen to 35.

Machinery established

The Covenant entrusted ECOSOC with the task of considering reports which the States parties are expected to provide regularly to the United Nations on the steps they have taken to promote and protect economic, social and cultural rights, and on the progress made in the enjoyment of these rights.

The reporting system now in force provides for each State party to submit an initial report within two years of ratifying or acceding to the Covenant, and thereafter to make reports at five-yearly intervals.

In 1978, ECOSOC established a 15-member sessional working group to assist it in considering the reports submitted by States parties. The working group was composed of representatives of States members of the Council which were also States parties to the Covenant. The membership reflected fair representation of the regional groups of countries in ECOSOC.

The working group, hitherto appointed by the chairman of ECOSOC, became an elected body of governmental human rights experts in 1982.

In 1985, the working group was transformed by ECOSOC into the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, with 18 members—experts with recognized competence in the field of human rights—who serve in their personal capacity.

Members of the Committee are elected by ECOSOC in a secret ballot from a list of persons nominated by the States parties to the Covenant. The principles of equitable geographical distribution and the representation of different social and legal systems are maintained.

Committee members are elected for four-year terms, and are eligible for re-election if re-nominated. Elections are held every two years for half the membership.* The Committee elects its own chairman, vice-chairmen and rapporteur.

Apart from considering the reports submitted by States parties, the Committee may make general recommendations to ECOSOC based

* Members of the Committee on 1 January 1991, were: Philip Alston (Australia), Juan Alvarez Vita (Peru), Abdel Halim Badawi (Egypt), Virginia Bonoan-Dandan (Philippines), Mohamed Lamine Fofana (Guinea), Luvsandanzangiin Ider (Mongolia), Maria de los Angeles Jimenez Butragueño (Spain), Samba Cor Konate (Senegal), Valeri Kouznetsov (USSR), Jaime Marchan Romero (Ecuador), Vassil Mratchkov (Bulgaria), Alexandre Muterahejuru (Rwanda), Wladyslaw Neneman (Poland), Kenneth Osborne Rattray (Jamaica), Bruno Simma (Germany), Mikis Demetriou Sparsis (Cyprus), Philippe Texier (France), Javier Wimer Zambrano (Mexico).

on its study of these reports and of those it receives from United Nations specialized agencies.

The establishment of the Committee put United Nations action to implement the Covenant on lines similar to those which have proved effective with other international human rights treaties: the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and, subsequently, the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Committee at work

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights holds an annual three-week session in Geneva. The meetings are usually held in public and summaries of the debates are issued to the media.

Several months in advance of each session a five-member working group meets to study the reports of States parties which are scheduled for examination and to identify the points which may be taken up with the representatives of the countries concerned. A list of the questions which are likely to be raised with each report is sent in advance to the State party concerned.

The examination of a report by the Committee may take up to two days. An introductory statement by a representative of the State party is followed by comments and questions on particular points from the Committee members. The State party's representative then replies to the questions and may be asked by the Committee to obtain supplementary information to be sent in later if answers are incomplete or not immediately available.

The discussion on each report by a State party is summarized in the Committee's annual report to ECOSOC.

Topics for discussion

A feature of each Committee session is a debate on one specific right or a particular article of the Covenant. The Committee invites specialists to contribute to these discussions which have so far dealt with basic human rights such as the right to food and the right to housing. It draws on the experience and findings of special rapporteurs for other human rights bodies, for example, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, as well as experts from various international agencies and non-governmental organizations.

General comments

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights makes general comments on the Covenant and the issues it raises. These comments draw on the experience gained in examining the reports of States with various socio-economic, cultural, political and legal systems in different parts of the world.

The intention is to help the States parties in their task of implementing the Covenant, as well as to bring to their attention deficiencies in the reports they submit and to suggest improvements in the reporting procedure.

The Committee's comments are also designed to accelerate action by the States parties, various international organizations and United Nations specialized agencies which will lead to the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.

Reports: more than a formal commitment

In one general comment the Committee has pointed out that the preparation of periodic reports is not simply a formal obligation. The first report by a State party should provide the occasion for a broad review of national legislation, administrative rules and procedures and practices as they affect the application of the Covenant.

The setting of goals for the realization of human rights should find expression in clearly stated and targeted policies which should be reflected in the reports of States parties.

The preparation of a report creates an opportunity for public scrutiny of government policies affecting economic, social and cultural rights, the Committee suggests. Some governments ask non-governmental organizations to take part in the preparation of reports to the Committee, and others invite public comment by giving them wide distribution.

Each State party should use the opportunity offered by the preparation of a report to set national goals in critical areas such as the reduction of infant mortality, vaccination of children, or the intake of calories per person. Reporting also serves as a way of identifying the obstacles to the realization of rights and creates a better understanding of the common problems faced by States and of the measures, including international assistance, which should be taken to overcome them.

While stressing the need for regular monitoring of the situation of economic, social and cultural rights, with special attention to less-favoured groups and regions, the Committee acknowledges that such monitoring can be both time-consuming and costly, and may make it necessary for some States parties to ask for international assistance.

Human rights and technical assistance

The Committee notes in another general comment that United Nations agencies should recognize the need to establish a close relationship between development activities and efforts to promote respect for human rights. It supports the proposal made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations that all major development co-operation activities should be accompanied by an assessment of their impact on human rights.

Human rights standards and principles should be included in the training and briefing of project staff and other personnel employed by United Nations development agencies.

The Committee also believes that at each stage of a development project, there should be efforts to ensure that the Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights are being observed.

Wherever possible, United Nations agencies should act as advocates of projects and approaches which contribute not only to economic growth or other broad aims, but also to greater enjoyment of human rights.

Many countries with a heavy debt burden have been obliged to take austerity measures. In the Committee's view, protection of the most basic economic, social and cultural rights becomes an urgent matter in these circumstances. As far as possible, protecting the rights of the poor and vulnerable should be a basic aim of economic adjustment policies and programmes. In the same way, international moves to deal with the debt crisis should take full account of the need to protect economic, social and cultural rights.

Indivisible, interdependent

The United Nations has accomplished the task of defining and describing basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. It has built—in the form of international treaties—an interlocking structure of defence for these rights and freedoms. It has created the means to measure progress in the enjoyment of human rights.

No single international agreement or treaty could cover so vast a subject, but the fact remains that human rights are indivisible and interdependent. Efforts to promote one category of rights must take full account of the progress and the setbacks in implementing others.

In this spirit, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights draws on many sources in monitoring the application of the Covenant. It has, as a background to its work, the evidence presented to other bodies and their conclusions on both specific and general problems in the human rights areas which directly concern each of them.

Thus, the Committee is kept informed of the activities of the General Assembly and ECOSOC in human rights matters. It receives detailed information on the proceedings of the Commission on Human Rights, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, and the bodies which have responsibilities similar to its own in monitoring the observance of international treaties: the Human Rights Committee (which oversees the implementation of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee against Torture and the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

It hears evidence from special rapporteurs appointed by other bodies to report on the situation in specific countries or on general human rights problems, as well as from outside experts. United Nations specialized agencies provide the Committee with reports of their activities, and its members also draw on the experience of non-governmental organizations.

In exchange, the Committee's discussions and reports fit into the pattern of information which enables all other bodies with human rights responsibilities to work effectively in their respective fields.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI) of 16 December 1966

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 3 January 1976, in accordance with article 27

PREAMBLE

The States Parties to the present Covenant,

Considering that, in accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Recognizing that these rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person,

Recognizing that, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his economic, social and cultural rights, as well as his civil and political rights,

Considering the obligation of States under the Charter of the United Nations to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and freedoms,

Realizing that the individual, having duties to other individuals and to the community to which he belongs, is under a responsibility to strive for the promotion and observance of the rights recognized in the present Covenant,

Agree upon the following articles:

PART I

Article 1

1. All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

2. All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.

3. The States Parties to the present Covenant, including those having responsibility for the administration of Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories, shall promote the realization of the right of self-determination, and shall respect that right, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

PART II

Article 2

1. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take steps, individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures.

2. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

3. Developing countries, with due regard to human rights and their national economy, may determine to what extent they would guarantee the economic rights recognized in the present Covenant to non-nationals.

Article 3

The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights set forth in the present Covenant.

Article 4

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that, in the enjoyment of those rights provided by the State in conformity with the present Covenant, the State may subject such rights only to such limitations as are determined by law only in so far as this may be compatible with the nature of these rights and solely for the purpose of promoting the general welfare in a democratic society.

Article 5

1. Nothing in the present Covenant may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights or freedoms recognized herein, or at their limitation to a greater extent than is provided for in the present Covenant.

2. No restriction upon or derogation from any of the fundamental human rights recognized or existing in any country in virtue of law, conventions, regulations or custom shall be admitted on the pretext that the present Covenant does not recognize such rights or that it recognizes them to a lesser extent.

Part III

Article 6

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right to work, which includes the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts, and will take appropriate steps to safeguard this right.

2. The steps to be taken by a State Party to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include technical and vocational guidance and training programmes, policies and techniques to achieve steady economic, social and cultural development and full and productive employment under conditions safeguarding fundamental political and economic freedoms to the individual.

Article 7

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work which ensure, in particular:

(*a*) Remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with:

(i) Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work;

(ii) A decent living for themselves and their families in accordance with the provisions of the present Covenant;

(*b*) Safe and healthy working conditions;

(*c*) Equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence;

(*d*) Rest, leisure and reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, as well as remuneration for public holidays.

Article 8

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure:

(*a*) The right of everyone to form trade unions and join the trade union of his choice, subject only to the rules of the organization concerned, for the promotion and protection of his economic and social interests. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic

society in the interests of national security or public order or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others;

(*b*) The right of trade unions to establish national federations or confederations and the right of the latter to form or join international trade-union organizations;

(*c*) The right of trade unions to function freely subject to no limitations other than those prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public order or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others;

(*d*) The right to strike, provided that it is exercised in conformity with the laws of the particular country.

2. This article shall not prevent the imposition of lawful restrictions on the exercise of these rights by members of the armed forces or of the police or of the administration of the State.

3. Nothing in this article shall authorize States Parties to the International Labour Organisation Convention of 1948 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize to take legislative measures which would prejudice, or apply the law in such a manner as would prejudice, the guarantees provided for in that Convention.

Article 9

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance.

Article 10

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that:

1. The widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family, which is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, particularly for its establishment and while it is responsible for the care and education of dependent children. Marriage must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouses.

2. Special protection should be accorded to mothers during a reasonable period before and after childbirth. During such period working mothers should be accorded paid leave or leave with adequate social security benefits.

3. Special measures of protection and assistance should be taken on behalf of all children and young persons without any discrimination for reasons of parentage or other conditions. Children and young persons should be protected from economic and social exploitation. Their employment in work harmful to their morals or health or dangerous to life or likely to hamper their normal development should be punishable by law. States should also set age limits below which the paid employment of child labour should be prohibited and punishable by law.

Article 11

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international co-operation based on free consent.

2. The States Parties to the present Covenant, recognizing the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, shall take, individually and through international co-operation, the measures, including specific programmes, which are needed:

(*a*) To improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge, by disseminating knowledge of the principles of nutrition and by developing or reforming agrarian systems in such a way as to achieve the most efficient development and utilization of natural resources;

(*b*) Taking into account the problems of both food-importing and food-exporting countries, to ensure an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need.

Article 12

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

2. The steps to be taken by the States Parties to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include those necessary for:

(*a*) The provision for the reduction of the stillbirth-rate and of infant mortality and for the healthy development of the child;

(*b*) The improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene;

(*c*) The prevention, treatment and control of epidemic, endemic, occupational and other diseases;

(*d*) The creation of conditions which would assure to all medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness.

Article 13

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

2. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that, with a view to achieving the full realization of this right:

(*a*) Primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all;

(*b*) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education;

(*c*) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education;

(*d*) Fundamental education shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education;

(*c*) The development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued, an adequate fellowship system shall be established, and the material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved.

3. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, which conform to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

4. No part of this article shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principles set forth in paragraph 1 of this article and to the requirement that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

Article 14

Each State Party to the present Covenant which, at the time of becoming a Party, has not been able to secure in its metropolitan territory or other territories under its jurisdiction compulsory primary education, free of charge, undertakes within two years, to work out and adopt a detailed plan of action for the progressive implementation, within a reasonable number of years, to be fixed in the plan, of the principle of compulsory education free of charge for all.

Article 15

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone:

(*a*) To take part in cultural life;

(*b*) To enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its application;

(*c*) To benefit from the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

2. The steps to be taken by the States Parties to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include those necessary for the conservation, the development and the diffusion of science and culture.

3. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to respect the freedom indispensable for scientific research and creative activity.

4. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the benefits to be derived from the encouragement and development of international contacts and co-operation in the scientific and cultural fields.

Part IV

Article 16

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to submit in conformity with this part of the Covenant reports on the measures which they have adopted and the progress made in achieving the observance of the rights recognized herein.

2. (*a*) All reports shall be submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall transmit copies to the Economic and Social Council for consideration in accordance with the provisions of the present Covenant;

(*b*) The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall also transmit to the specialized agencies copies of the reports, or any relevant parts therefrom, from States Parties to the present Covenant which are also members of these specialized agencies in so far as these reports, or parts therefrom, relate to any matters which fall within the responsibilities of the said agencies in accordance with their constitutional instruments.

Article 17

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant shall furnish their reports in stages, in accordance with a programme to be established by the Economic and Social Council within one year of the entry into force of the present Covenant after consultation with the States Parties and the specialized agencies concerned.

2. Reports may indicate factors and difficulties affecting the degree of fulfilment of obligations under the present Covenant.

3. Where relevant information has previously been furnished to the United Nations or to any specialized agency by any State Party to the present Covenant, it will not be necessary to reproduce that information, but a precise reference to the information so furnished will suffice.

Article 18

Pursuant to its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the Economic and Social Council may make arrangements with the specialized agencies in respect of their reporting to it on the progress made in achieving the observance of the provisions of the present Covenant falling within the scope of their activities. These reports may include particulars of decisions and recommendations on such implementation adopted by their competent organs.

Article 19

The Economic and Social Council may transmit to the Commission on Human Rights for study and general recommendation or, as appropriate, for information the reports concerning human rights submitted by States in accordance with articles 16 and 17, and those concerning human rights submitted by the specialized agencies in accordance with article 18.

Article 20

The States Parties to the present Covenant and the specialized agencies concerned may submit comments to the Economic and Social Council on any general recommendation under article 19 or reference to such general recommendation in any report of the Commission on Human Rights or any documentation referred to therein.

Article 21

The Economic and Social Council may submit from time to time to the General Assembly reports with recommendations of a general nature and a summary of the information received from the States Parties to the present Covenant and the specialized agen-

cies on the measures taken and the progress made in achieving general observance of the rights recognized in the present Covenant.

Article 22

The Economic and Social Council may bring to the attention of other organs of the United Nations, their subsidiary organs and specialized agencies concerned with furnishing technical assistance any matters arising out of the reports referred to in this part of the present Covenant which may assist such bodies in deciding, each within its field of competence, on the advisability of international measures likely to contribute to the effective progressive implementation of the present Covenant.

Article 23

The States Parties to the present Covenant agree that international action for the achievement of the rights recognized in the present Covenant includes such methods as the conclusion of conventions, the adoption of recommendations, the furnishing of technical assistance and the holding of regional meetings and technical meetings for the purpose of consultation and study organized in conjunction with the Governments concerned.

Article 24

Nothing in the present Covenant shall be interpreted as impairing the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and of the constitutions of the specialized agencies which define the respective responsibilities of the various organs of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies in regard to the matters dealt with in the present Covenant.

Article 25

Nothing in the present Covenant shall be interpreted as impairing the inherent right of all peoples to enjoy and utilize fully and freely their natural wealth and resources.

PART V

Article 26

1. The present Covenant is open for signature by any State Member of the United Nations or member of any of its specialized agencies, by any State Party to the Statute of the International Court of Justice, and by any other State which has been invited by the General Assembly of the United Nations to become a party to the present Covenant.

2. The present Covenant is subject to ratification. Instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

3. The present Covenant shall be open to accession by any State referred to in paragraph 1 of this article.

4. Accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument of accession with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

5. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall inform all States which have signed the present Covenant or acceded to it of the deposit of each instrument of ratification or accession.

Article 27

1. The present Covenant shall enter into force three months after the date of the deposit with the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the thirty-fifth instrument of ratification or instrument of accession.

2. For each State ratifying the present Covenant or acceding to it after the deposit of the thirty-fifth instrument of ratification or instrument of accession, the present Covenant shall enter into force three months after the date of the deposit of its own instrument of ratification or instrument of accession.

Article 28

The provisions of the present Covenant shall extend to all parts of federal States without any limitations or exceptions.

Article 29

1. Any State Party to the present Covenant may propose an amendment and file it with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Secretary-General shall thereupon communicate any proposed amendments to the States Parties to the present Covenant with a request that they notify him whether they favour a conference of States Parties for the purpose of considering and voting upon the proposals. In the event that at least one third of the States Parties favours such a conference, the Secretary-General shall convene the conference under the auspices of the United Nations. Any amendment adopted by a majority of the States Parties present and voting at the conference shall be submitted to the General Assembly of the United Nations for approval.

2. Amendments shall come into force when they have been approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations and accepted by a two-thirds majority of the States Parties to the present Covenant in accordance with their respective constitutional processes.

3. When amendments come into force they shall be binding on those States Parties which have accepted them, other States Parties still being bound by the provisions of the present Covenant and any earlier amendment which they have accepted.

Article 30

Irrespective of the notifications made under article 26, paragraph 5, the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall inform all States referred to in paragraph 1 of the same article of the following particulars:

(*a*) Signatures, ratifications and accessions under article 26;

(*b*) The date of the entry into force of the present Covenant under article 27 and the date of the entry into force of any amendments under article 29.

Article 31

1. The present Covenant, of which the Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited in the archives of the United Nations.

2. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall transmit certified copies of the present Covenant to all States referred to in article 26.

ANNEX II

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 16 December 1966

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 3 January 1976, in accordance with article 27.
REGISTRATION: 3 January 1976, No. 14531.
TEXT: United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 993, p. 3.
NOTE: The Covenant was opened for signature at New York on 19 December 1966.

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification, accession (a), succession (d)*
Afghanistan		24 Jan. 1983(a)
Algeria	10 Dec. 1968	12 Sep. 1989
Argentina	19 Feb. 1968	8 Aug. 1986
Australia	18 Dec. 1972	10 Dec. 1975
Austria	10 Dec. 1973	10 Sep. 1978
Barbados		5 Jan. 1973(a)
Belarus	19 Mar. 1968	12 Nov. 1973
Belgium	10 Dec. 1968	21 Apr. 1983
Bolivia		12 Aug. 1982(a)
Bulgaria	8 Oct. 1968	21 Sep. 1970
Burundi		9 May 1990(a)
Cameroon		27 Jun. 1984(a)
Canada		19 May 1976(a)
Central African Republic		8 May 1981(a)
Chile	16 Sep. 1969	10 Feb. 1972
China		
Colombia	21 Dec. 1966	29 Oct. 1969
Congo		5 Oct. 1983(a)
Costa Rica	19 Dec. 1966	29 Nov. 1968
Cyprus	9 Jan. 1967	2 Apr. 1969
Czech and Slovak Federal Republic	7 Oct. 1968	23 Dec. 1975
Democratic Kampuchea	17 Oct. 1980	
Democratic People's Republic of Korea		14 Sep. 1981(a)
Denmark	20 Mar. 1968	6 Jan. 1972
Dominican Republic		4 Jan. 1978(a)
Ecuador	29 Sep. 1967	6 Mar. 1969
Egypt	4 Aug. 1967	14 Jan. 1982
El Salvador	21 Sep. 1967	30 Nov. 1979
Equatorial Guinea		25 Sep. 1987(a)
Finland	11 Oct. 1967	19 Aug. 1975
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Gabon		21 Jan. 1983(a)
Gambia		29 Dec. 1978(a)
Germany	9 Oct. 1968	17 Dec. 1973
Greece		16 May 1985(a)
Grenada		6 Sep. 1991
Guatemala		19 May 1988(a)

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification, accession (a), succession (d)*
Guinea	28 Feb. 1967	24 Jan. 1978
Guyana	22 Aug. 1968	15 Feb. 1977
Honduras	19 Dec. 1966	17 Feb. 1981
Hungary	25 March 1969	17 Jan. 1974
Iceland	30 Dec. 1968	22 Aug. 1979
India		10 Apr. 1979(a)
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	4 Apr. 1968	24 Jun. 1975
Iraq	18 Feb. 1969	25 Jan. 1971
Ireland	1 Oct. 1973	8 Dec. 1989
Israel	19 Dec. 1966	
Italy	18 Jan. 1967	15 Sep. 1978
Jamaica	19 Dec. 1966	3 Oct. 1975
Japan	30 May 1978	21 Jun. 1979
Jordan	30 Jun. 1972	28 May 1975
Kenya		1 May 1972(a)
Lebanon		3 Nov. 1972(a)
Liberia	18 Apr. 1967	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya		15 May 1970(a)
Luxembourg	26 Nov. 1974	18 Aug. 1983
Madagascar	14 Apr. 1970	22 Sep. 1971
Mali		16 Jul. 1974(a)
Malta	22 Oct. 1968	13 Sep. 1990(a)
Mauritius		12 Dec. 1973(a)
Mexico		23 Mar. 1981(a)
Mongolia	5 Jun. 1968	18 Nov. 1974
Morocco	19 Jan. 1977	3 May 1979
Nepal		14 May 1991
Netherlands	25 Jun. 1969	11 Dec. 1978
New Zealand	12 Nov. 1968	28 Dec. 1978
Nicaragua		12 Mar. 1980(a)
Niger		7 Mar. 1986(a)
Norway	20 Mar. 1968	13 Sep. 1972
Panama	27 Jul. 1976	8 Mar. 1977
Peru	11 Aug. 1977	28 Apr. 1978
Philippines	19 Dec. 1966	7 Jun. 1974
Poland	2 Mar. 1967	18 Mar. 1977
Portugal	7 Oct. 1976	31 Jul. 1978
Republic of Korea		10 Apr. 1990(a)
Romania	27 Jun. 1968	9 Dec. 1974
Rwanda		16 April 1975(a)
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines		9 Nov. 1981(a)
San Marino		18 Oct. 1985(a)
Senegal	6 Jul. 1970	13 Feb. 1978
Solomon Islands		17 Mar. 1982(a)
Somalia		24 Jan. 1990(a)
Spain	28 Sep. 1976	27 Apr. 1977
Sri Lanka		11 Jun. 1980(a)
Sudan		18 Mar. 1986(a)
Suriname		28 Dec. 1976(a)
Sweden	29 Sep. 1967	6 Dec. 1971

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification accession (a) succession (d)*
Syrian Arab Republic		21 Apr. 1969(a)
Togo		24 May 1984(a)
Trinidad and Tobago		8 Dec. 1978(a)
Tunisia	30 Apr. 1968	18 Mar. 1969
Uganda		21 Jan. 1987(a)
Ukraine	20 Mar. 1968	12 Nov. 1973
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	18 Mar. 1968	16 Oct. 1973
United Kingdom	16 Sep. 1968	20 May 1976
United Republic of Tanzania		11 Jun. 1976(a)
United States of America	5 Oct. 1977	
Uruguay	21 Feb. 1967	1 Apr. 1970
Venezuela	24 Jun 1969	10 May 1978
Viet Nam		24 Sep. 1982(a)
Yemen		9 Feb. 1987(a)
Yugoslavia	8 Aug. 1967	2 Jun 1971
Zaire		1 Nov. 1976(a)
Zambia		10 Apr. 1984(a)
Zimbabwe		13 May 1991

Human Rights Fact Sheets:

No. 1 *Human Rights Machinery*
No. 2 *The International Bill of Human Rights*
No. 3 *Advisory Services and Technical Assistance in the Field of Human Rights*
No. 4 *Methods of Combating Torture*
No. 5 *Programme of Action for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination*
No. 6 *Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances*
No. 7 *Communications Procedures*
No. 8 *World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights*
No. 9 *The Rights of Indigenous Peoples*
No. 10 *The Rights of the Child*
No. 11 *Summary or Arbitrary Executions*
No. 12 *The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*
No. 13 *International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights*
No. 14 *Contemporary Forms of Slavery*
No. 15 *Civil and Political Rights: The Human Rights Committee*
No. 16 *The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*

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Printed at United Nations, Geneva
GE.91-15867–October 1991–11,110

ISSN 1014-5567

Human Rights

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